

Hot Spots, Dark Side Dots, Tin-pots? Reflections on the Uneven Internationalism in Global Academic Markets

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Language has a crucial role in the practice of academic research where scientific facts, arguments and theories are constructed, communicated and evaluated in the form of written statements i.e. scientific work is largely a literary and interpretative activity (Bourdieu). Human geographers have become increasingly sensitive to the fact that language and context are crucial for the construction scientific accounts. Respectively the role of language and the relations between knowledge and power have become hotly debated issues in recent accounts on the “Anglo-American hegemony” in geography. A number of scholars working largely outside of the English speaking world or in the formerly colonized ‘peripheries’ of this world have been particularly worried about what can be labelled as “the uneven geographies of international publishing spaces”. Firstly, I will discuss in this paper generally the importance of context in (social scientific) academic writing in a situation where the processes of globalization take place not only in economic or cultural sense but also in the production of knowledge. Knowledge has been for a long time regarded as a crucial element of social reproduction for states but now this function seems to be rescaling so that national science policies are increasingly homogenizing and at the same time competition and corporatization are becoming dominating features of academic life round the world. This has implications on how relevant knowledge is defined, produced, controlled and manipulated. Secondly, I will scrutinize the increasing importance of English language in the academic markets and how this is particularly challenging for social scientists operating outside of the English speaking world. Thirdly, to illustrate how space makes a difference in the legitimization of knowledge I will make preliminary observations on the current production of the ‘scalar geographies’ of academic contexts by using such metaphors as ‘hot spots’, ‘dark side dots’ and ‘tin-pots’.